Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1697 - February 19, 2010

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1697 with a release date of Friday, February 19th, 2010 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The ARRL commits to helping change rule 97:113 so more hams cab take part in disaster drills, the FCC issues a giant waiver to part 97.113 covering thirty-two licensed ham employees in Georgia, a California ham solves a Broadcast Remote Pick-up jamming problem and rare earth is growing a lot rarer. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1697 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

**

RADIO LAW: ARRL SAYS VIA QST IT WILL FILE TO REVISE FCC RULE 97.113 TO PERMIT HAMS TO VOLUNTEER EMCOMM TRAINING SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

The ARRL appears poised to ask the FCC to liberalize Section 97.113 of the Amateur Service rules. This to give hams more leeway in taking part in emergency training drills sponsored by their employer. Amateur Radio Newsline's Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, has been following events in this ongoing saga and has the latest:

--

With the arrival of February's QST comes confirmation that the American Radio Relay League is, indeed, preparing to formally join the call for change to Section 97.113.

Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, confirmed the issue has been a hot topic ever since the release of a report from an ARRL board ad-hoc committee regarding the whole issue of "pecuniary interest" and amateur radio.

Given how much attention the issue has gotten at the FCC - the result of petitions filed requesting changes in the rule - the ARRL is now ready to act.

In his editorial in the February QST, Sumner referred to the ARRL's board motion instructing ARRL staff to "urge the FCC to add an exception to 97.113 of the FCC Rules to permit an amateur station - licensee or control operator, on behalf of an employer, to 'participate in emergency preparedness and disaster drills that include amateur operations for the purpose of emergency response, disaster relief or the testing and maintenance of equipment used for that purpose. "

Sumner concedes in his editorial that there are a wide range of views from among ARRL's membership ranks with some suggesting there be no change at all in the rule to others saying it's just too limiting.

Sumner says: "Given that the FCC appears to be inclined to consider changes, it behooves the ARRL as the representative of the broadest constituency of radio amateurs to formulate an approach that addresses the

bulk of the concerns about the present rules with as little impact as possible on the volunteer character of Amateur Radio."

As we told you a few weeks ago when we reported on a petition on the matter filed by Rich Moseson, W2VU, of CQ Magazine, this isn't going to happen overnight. As Moseson concluded, the FCC is likely to await the ARRL's petition and then put that together with input from some of the other filings before issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. And, that could take a few months before it comes out for comment.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia.

--

Along with the filing from educator Gordon West, WB6NOA and his two associates, and the one from CQ Magazine, the rules change petition from the ARRL will make three requests to the FCC with one singular purpose. That of making it possible for hams to volunteer their services when their employer is holding an emergency training exercise and doing so without having to have the employer first file for a waiver from the FCC. (ARNewsline(tm) from QST Editorial)

**

RESCUE RADIO: POSSIBLY THE LARGEST EMCOMM WAIVER YET

Meantime, the FCC continues to quickly grant waivers to governments and emergency providers looking to use ham radio operators in their employ as part of disaster response training exercises. The latest is to Stephens County Emergency Medical Services of Toccoa, Georgia to permit their employees and those of the Stephens County Hospital to transmit communications on behalf of their employers in connection with a twelve hour March 17th exercise.

And in what may be the largest numbers to date, this waiver issued on February 16th from the FCC's Deputy Chief of its Mobility Division covers thirty-two radio amateurs in the employ of the these organizations who have volunteered to take part. The waiver specifically permits transmission of communications by the amateur service employees on behalf of their employers during the exercise, and immediately prior to it for the purpose of operational testing of equipment. You can read the text of this waiver at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-246A1.txt (FCC)

**

RADIO WEATHER: WINTER STORM CLOSES FCC

Due to back-to-back major snowstorms in the Washington metropolitan area last week, the Federal Communications Commission was forced to postpone two important meetings. One was the Wednesday, February 10th was to be public forum on creating an emergency response center for pubic safety broadband communications. The other its monthly open public meeting on Thursday the 11th.

The commission's February open monthly meeting was rescheduled for
 February

18th. Two items on the agenda concern streamlining the agency's processes to make the FCC's work more transparent. One is a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to enhance the efficiency, openness and transparency of the commission's proceedings by improving and modernizing certain organizational and procedural rules. The concerns the so-called "ex parte"
rules, which govern reports written by those who meet with commission officials to sum up what was discussed. (FCC)

**

HAITI UPDATE: IRESC HAM RADIO RELIEF EFFORTS OVER THE INTERNET

A report from the International Radio Emergency Support Coalition says that its members went into full activation bringing immediately after the earthquake that devastated much of the island nation of Haiti. According to Chris Johnson things on the Echolink based conference net sprang to life when David Farquharson HH2QCS and Jean-Robert Gaillard HH2JR were able to get into contact with the Coalition. They both had rather grim reports. HH2JR noted that he had lost several close family members. He also lost his cousin, Micha Gaillard, the Opposition Leader in Haiti. Jean-Robert himself reported that had been attacked by mobs.

The International Radio Emergency Support Coalition through the Echolink Net and the database on its website says that it was able to help with the limited amount of information coming out of the island, along with collecting information on missing people, coordinating of supplies to people on the ground, along with general inquires. At one point the Coalition says that it had over 200 hams monitoring its net for Haiti operations. It says that this shows the true potential of the use of Echolink along with other amateur radio internet applications for use in the use of emergency communications.

The International Radio Emergency Support Coalition bills itself as an alliance of volunteer communicators spread around the globe. More about this group is on-line at www.iresc.org. (IRESC)

**

MISSING PERSON: UK POLICE SEARCH FOR MISSING RADIO AMATEUR

Police in the United Kingdom are in search of missing radio amateur. The Tamworth Herald reports that police are appealing for help in tracing 43 year old David Andrew Salisbury, M3FDZ, of Newton Regis who not been seen since Friday January 29.

Salisbury, a married father of two disappeared unexpectedly and without a trace. He is described as a white male and around 5 foot 5 inches tall. He has what is described as striking straight white hair and was last seen wearing blue jeans, a gray T-shirt with the words 'Rock and Roll' in red, a blue hooded top and black cap with the letters 'NY' on the front in white lettering.

M3FDZ is a member of Tamworth Amateur Radio Club which is also concerned about his welfare. More details and a photograph of David Salisbury, M3FDZ, can be found at

www.thisistamworth.co.uk/news/Appeal-trace-missing-Tamworth-man/article-1823807-detail/article.htm
(Southgate)

**

BREAK 1

From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the KC6OCA repeater serving Lake Isabella, California.

(5 sec pause here)

**

ENFORCEMENT: 450 MHZ INTERFERENCE NAILS METRO TRAFFIC IN SAN DIEGO

Ham radio training in direction finding is responsible for bringing a quick end to the jamming of a broadcast repeater run by Metro Traffic in Southern California. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, spoke to the ham who solved the problem so that the airborne traffic reports could continue:

--

According to broadcast engineer Matt Lunati, N6OEI, Metro Traffic's voice repeater in San Diego was jammed about a week ago by a large number of simplex hand-held radios that were pressed into service by the near-by La Mesa-Spring Valley School District. The radios were reportedly programmed to transmit on 455.500 MHz and sold to the School District by an equipment dealer that told the district not to worry about licensing.

455.500 MHz is Metro's licensed repeater input frequency and the resulting interference that jammed Metro's helicopter communications.

So N6OEI used his direction finding skills garnered from hid amateur radio training to track down the source of the interference:

--

N6OEI: "I heard children's activities being described on the channel. And the next day I trook a listen after what would be school hours (and) drive time for us when we have our chopper in the air and noticed that the communications came up again on our frequency and tracked it to the elementary school located in the Casa D'Oro area of San Diego County. It took me about 30 minutes. There was a lot of chatter on the frequency so finding it and DF'ing it was not difficult at all."

--

He then met with the school district staff to explain that 450 to 460 MHz is not a licensee-free band:

--

N6OEI: "To rectify the problem immediately, because obviously they did not know the amount of problems they were causing, I went and made contact with the school principal who was very accommodating and very apologetic and ceased operation right there and assured me this would not happen again."

--

Reportedly, the San Diego FCC field office is now involved in the case. The Commission might only go after the school district for allegedly operating on an unauthorized frequency. However the dealer could also face the Commission's wrath. This is because FCC Rule 90.427(b) states that: "Except for frequencies used in accordance with Section 90.417, no person shall program into a transmitter frequencies for which the licensee using the transmitter is not authorized."

Add to this a report carried in the C-G-C Communicator industry newsletter that quotes an informed stating that once it became obvious that 455.500 MHz was causing interference, the equipment vendor reportedly supplied a list of other frequencies for the district to try. If such a list exists, it would be a smoking gun since the 450 band is not license free.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in the Newsroom in the City of Angels.

--

Translated it means that the equipment dealer could conceivably be liable if the FCC decides to press the case. (CGC, ARNewsline(tm))

**

RADIO LAW: CELLPHONE BILLS BEFORE HAWAII HOUSE WILL EXEMPT HAM RADIO

Some good news for hams living on the Island state of Hawaii. It appears as if they will likely be safe from rules to be imposed on the mobile use of cellular telephones.

Pacific ARRL Section Manager Bob Schneider, AH6J, and Bart Aronoff, WH6AA recently testified before a Hawaii house subcommittee on HB 2225 however HB2602 is now before committee in place of 2225. Both measures deal with the use of cellular telephones while driving.

Conferees are now trying to combine HB2602 with SB2755 to come up with a final version. Both of these bills as well as the recently passed Kauai council bill 226 exempt amateur radio operators from the restrictions imposed by what is known as mobile cellphone prohibitions. (hamradiohawaii via KH6QX)

**

ON LINE: NEW ARRL WEBSITE TO BE ON-LINE BY THE END OF FEBRUARY

The American Radio Relay League says that after more than two years of planning and design that the it is eagerly anticipating the launch of its new Web site. According to a posting at the current site, the new web design will be available at the end of February at the same URL. .

The big change is in overall design that the ARRL says should make the online experience easier for its members. The ARRL says that the improvements were made with visitors in mind to create the easiest, most enjoyable online experience possible.

A preview of the new web design can be found in the latest issue of QST magazine. And for the few of you who may not be aware, the on-line address of the ARRL website is www.arrl.org. (ARRL)

**

THE SOCIAL SCENE: W5KUB WILL AGAIN WEBCAST HAMVENTION

For the 8th consecutive year, Tom Medlin, W5KUB, and his crew of video enthusiasts will be webcasting the Dayton Hamvention. The live broadcast starts approximately 1300 UTC on May 13th and continue through May 17th over Tom's w5kub.com website.

The webcast begins and ends in Tom's driveway in Cordova, Tennessee and includes the scenic trip from Cordova to Dayton. And as last year, Tom plans to give away prizes to some who tune in.

The W5KUB.com website is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 52 weeks a year for you to enjoy. Tom invites everyone to drop by, spend a few minutes and say hello on-line. And for more about Tom and his live roving webcasts look at his profile on qrz.com. (W5KUB)

**

THE SOCIAL SCENE: EASTERN VHF/UHF CONFERENCE IN APRIL

Registration is now open for the 36th Annual Eastern VHF/UHF Conference slated for April 16th to the 18th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, in Enfield, CT. Also, the NorthEast Weak Signal Group is calling for the submission of papers and presentations on both the technical and operational aspects of VHF, UHF and Microwave weak signal amateur radio. The latest conference news can be found on-line at http://www.newsvhf.com/vhfconf.html (ANS, N2LIV)

**

THE SOCIAL SCENE: NEBRASKA ARRL CONVENTION IN MARCH

The ARRL Nebraska State Convention End of Winter Hamfest will take place on March 20th at the Lancaster Event Center located at 84th and Havelock in Lincoln. Among the featured speakers are Bob Allison, WB1GCM, from ARRL HQ giving a look at the ARRL Lab and how it works and the ARRL Midwest Division Director, Cliff Ahrens, Kï¿½CA,. Ahrens will be bringing attendees up to date happenings at ARRL HQ and within the Division. For more information, please visit the www.lincolnhamfest.org. (Kï¿½AIZ)

**

NAMES IN THE NEWS: K0DAS NAMED NEW ARRL MIDWEST VICE DIRECTOR

ARRL President, Kay Craigie, N3KN, has appointed Rod Blocksome, K0DAS, of Robins, Iowa, as the new Vice Director in the Midwest Division.

Among his many Achievements, Blocksome has been a member of the Central States VHF Society since 1975 and a Charter Life Member since 2001. He has served as President of the organization in 1984, 1991 and 1998, with 21 years on its Board of Directors. He is also the recipient of the Society's 1993 Mel Wilson Award. An avid Collins Radio aficionado, Blocksome has been a member of the Collins Collector Association since 1996 and has served two years on its Board of Directors.

The position of Midwest Division Vice Director became vacant when Director Bruce Frahm, K0BJ, was elected ARRL Vice President at the recent 2010 ARRL Board of Directors Annual Meeting. As a result, then Vice Director Cliff Ahrens, K0CA, moved into the Director seat. (ARRL)

**

NAMES IN THE NEWS: N4KC TO PUBLISH 21st BOOK IN APRIL

Don Keith N4KC will release his twenty-first book titled War Beneath the Waves in early April. This is the non-fiction work that will tell the story of USS Billfish. The Billfish was an American submarine that came under an intense depth-charge attack in the Makassar Strait off Borneo in 1943. And in an interview with Rain's Hap Holly, KC9RP, Don gave a little background on the story:

--

"Well, as it happens the captain of this submarine completely lost it. The second in command was overcome by bad air and couldn't breathe. The third in command had to be sedated and put in his stateroom because he lost it. So the forth in command, a young sub-mariner named Charlie Rush actually took over from the captain. It might be called a mutiny at some points but it had to happen. He took over and (with) a couple of Navy Chiefs just performed miraculous feats that night and saved the boat."

--

N4KC says that this incident brought out the worst but also the best in its crew. It was also a story that was not revealed for sixty years.

War Beneath the Waves will be published in hardback by NAL/Caliber. This is an imprint of Penguin Group USA. Don also maintains a web site devoted to his writings on amateur radio at www dot n4kc dot com. And you can hear the complete interview with Don Keith, N4KC, on-line at www dot therainreport dot com. Its one you will not want to miss. (N4KC, KC9RP)

**

BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

**

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: NEW 100 GHZ TRANSISTOR ANNOUNCED

Its the fastest high frequency transistor ever developed. Amateur Radio Newslines Frank Haas, KB4T, reports:

--

Researchers at IBM have demonstrated a graphene-based radio frequency transistor with a high frequency cut-off of 100 Gigahertz. This new top frequency record was achieved using wafer-scale processing technology comparable to that used in the fabrication of advanced silicon devices

For those who have never heard the term, graphene is described as a single atom-thick layer of carbon atoms bonded in a hexagonal honeycomb-like arrangement. This two-dimensional form of carbon has unique electrical, optical, mechanical and thermal properties and its technological applications are being explored intensely.

The development of this new 100 Gigahertz transistor is considered a key milestone for the use of Carbon Electronics for RF Applications. The development of this new transistor was recently made public in a paper published in the magazine Science.

--

Funding for this project was funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in an effort to develop next-generation communication devices. (Science OnLine)

**

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: GOOGLE COULD BE YOUR NEXT ISP

Google could become your next Internet Service Provider or ISP. This, according to news reports that say the search engine provider wants to offer super-fast broadband to thousands of US homes.

It the reports are accurate then Google's plan is to build a fiber-optic network offering speeds of up to 1gigabit per second and roll it out in up to 500,000 homes. And to do this at a price point that would compete with other broadband providers offering much slower speeds.

According to Google's on-line blog the plan is to build and test ultra high-speed broadband networks in a small number of trial locations across the United States. The company already has an internal fiber optic network which connects its data centers. This speeds up search functions and lowers the cost of streaming video on YouTube. (BBC, Science Today, others)

**

WORLDBEAT: NEW DRM DISCO STATION ON SHORTWAVE

If you think that shortwave is a dead medium for entertainment then you may be surprised to learn about a Miami-based disco music station can now be heard across North America and Europe. The Disco Palace is using Digital Radio Mondiale or D-R-M technology to broadcast high-quality music programs on shortwave.

Programming for The Disco Palace consists of disco music from the 1970s and 1980s or music closely related to disco. North American broadcasts originate on 17.755 MHz from French Guiana. European transmissions are on 6.015 MHz from France. Transmission services are being provided by Digital Radio Mondiale pioneer TDF of France. (DRM Info)

**

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: NEW POWER MANAGEMENT CHIPS FROM TI

Texas Instruments Incorporated has introduced its first dual-output fully synchronous SWIFT(tm) power management integrated circuit. TI says the TPS54290 converter simplifies power design in consumer electronics with a 12 volt power supply. The new device operates from a 4.5V to 18V input supply voltage, and supports output voltages as low as 0.8V with a 90 percent power efficiency rating. More is on the web at www.ti.com (PSD)

**

HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ASTRONAUT RON GARAN TO GET HIS HAM TICKET

Another astronaut is preparing to take his ham radio exam. Ron Garan recently participated in an Amateur Radio on the International Space Station program training session and plans to study for his amateur radio license. Garan is scheduled to fly with the Expedition 27 crew in March of 2011. (ARISS)

**

RADIO IN SPACE: ARECIBO DISH ACTIVE FOR APOLLO EME 2010

Echoes of Apollo EME 2010 or World Moon Bounce Day, is scheduled for the weekend of April 16, 17, and 18. This year, EOA has been given a special opportunity to use the Arecibo Dish in Puerto Rico as the ultimate "big gun" station on 432 MHz SSB & CW. EME operation on 1296 MHz may also be possible.

Arecibo has more than 50 dbi gain on 432 MHz so the team thinks it can be heard with modest equipment. Listeners with a unique opportunity to utilize modest UHF and 1296 stations to copy EME signals. A large OSCAR-class antenna array equipped station may be able to participate. (Echoes of Apollo)

**

DX

In DX, word that F8ALU is active from Morocco as CN2BG and will be there

until the beginning of March. You usually will find him on 14.115 and 14.130 MHz. QSL via his home call.

JT1JC has been very active in RTTY and PSK31 from Mongolia the last few weeks. Listen for her on 20 meters on PSK from 2245 to 0030 UTC and in RTTY from 0700 to 0800 UTC. QSL via PO Box 73, Ulaanbaatar-35, Mongolia.

DL1NL is operating portable OA4 from the Peruvian capital Lima through mid to late February. He is active mostly in CW on HF whenever his time permits. QSL cards should be sent via his home call.

V31RI is the call of DL6RAI, operating in Belize through March 2nd. His QTH is Consejo Beach and you can expect activities mostly in CW and in SSB. QSLs via bureau or direct to his home call. He's also accepting electronic cards via Logbook of the World.

And lastly, NP2OR is active from Uganda and will be there until May. He is on the air as 5X7JD using SSB on 20 and 40 meters daily from 0500 to 1550 UTC. QSLs only direct via Jack Dunigan, Box 100, Masaka, Uganda.

(Above from various DX news sources)

**

THAT FINAL ITEM: RARE EARTHS GETTING RARER

And finally this week comes word that rare-earth elements such as Europium, Tantalum, Neodymium and countless others that form the backbone of today's modern solid state electronics and ham radio gear could eventually be in short supply. This, according to an article by Jeremy Hsu published by Yahoo On-Line that says China's growing electronic production industry has become the worlds largest user of these rare elements.

According to Hsu, rare earth's often prove irreplaceable in green technologies and high-tech consumer products. Yet the world's production of rare minerals relies mainly upon China, and the Chinese government warned last year that its own rising demand will soon force it to stop exporting the precious elements.

Deposits of rare earth elements exist in the United States, Canada and other countries, but only China's government supports the mining and refining industries capable of processing the resources from start to finish. And while China has encouraged companies that use rare earths to locate their manufacturing facilities in that nation, some companies fear moving because of concerns about intellectual property protection.

Hsu's article is an insightful look at materials that affect almost everyone's daily life and especially those in ham radio. You can find it on-line
at
http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20100216/sc_livescience/shortageofrareearthelementscouldthwartinnovation
(N6ZXJ)

**

NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), 28197 Robin Avenue, Santa Clarita California, 91350

Before we go, a reminder that the nominating period for the 2010 Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now open. Each year, we here at the Amateur Radio Newsline in association with Vertex Standard Corporation -- the makers of Yaesu brand ham radio gear -- and CQ Magazine combine to honor a ham radio operator age 18 or younger for his or her contributions to ham radio or to society itself through ham radio.

All nominations and materials required by the official rules must be received by Amateur Radio Newsline no later than midnight on May 30th. Both "mail-in" and electronic submissions are being accepted this year. Full rules and a downloadable nominating form are now on our website at www dot arnewsline dot org. Just scroll down until you see "2010 Young Ham of the Year Awards Now Being Accepted" and click on the word "here" to download the directions and the form. You can also leave questions and comments on the official Young Ham of the Year Award page on Facebook dot com.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Davis, W2JKD, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2010. All rights reserved.